

Red Deer,

Our largest land mammal the majestic Red deer is one of our most impressive wildlife spectacles in the Cairngorms National Park and an encounter with them is unforgettable.

Grazing on grasses, sedges, heather and woody plants they can be found over a large swathe of the park from woodlands to moorland right up to the mountain tops. Woodland living red deer are generally bigger than hill deer due to the better quality feeding and shelter woodlands offer. Hill deer can live in large groups, sometimes consisting of hundreds of individuals, and with their dark russet brown coats with a paler buff rump they can be easily spotted on open ground.



Stags, the males, have large branching antlers, which increase in size as they get older and with quality food availability, a mature stag can weigh as much as 15kg. Stags and hinds (female red deer) are usually in separate herds, except during the autumn breeding season, known as the 'rut' when males bellow to proclaim their territory, fighting over females putting their antlers to good use during testosterone powered fights that can result in severe injuries.



Wild Deer in Scotland

Scotland supports the largest population of red deer in Europe and they are a huge asset to Scotland being an important part of our rural economy and culture, integral to Scotland's biodiversity and a resource of healthy food and recreational activities.

Red deer help to shape habitats through their grazing activities creating areas for seedling regeneration, providing a source of dung and carrion utilised by other species and maintaining rural communities.

However too much grazing and trampling by deer can have negative impacts on important habitats and associated species.

Managing Deer

In Scotland deer have no natural predators, populations are therefore managed to limit their impacts and to prevent road traffic accidents.

Deer managers work together in one of several deer management groups in the national parks. The Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group was set up to aid communication about deer management between various interest groups.

Across the Cairngorms National Park this group is aiming to achieve a patchwork of deer densities allowing different deer management objectives to be achieved in different areas.

Deer stalking in Scotland is thought to bring in more than £100 million annually to the economy and is an important land use in the park.



Stay home

**Protect the NHS
Save lives**

The current government advice is that there should be no unnecessary travel at this time. Whilst it is important to get outside and exercise you must do so locally and observe social distancing measures. To enjoy the outdoors you can undertake exercise such as a run, walk, or cycle. This should be done alone or only with people you live with. During this period there should be no wild camping, fires or barbecues anywhere in the Park.